



Office of Environmental Justice and Tribal Affairs Newsletter

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Message from the Director

Jonathan B. Hook, Ph. D.

On October 18, Tribal leaders and representatives met in Shawnee, Oklahoma with Roger R. Martella, Jr., EPA's new General Counsel to discuss issues affecting Oklahoma tribes and the 2005 transportation bill. While much of the dialogue focused on the agreement being negotiated between the state and one tribe, two other topics of interest were discussed.

One is that while EPA denied jurisdiction to tribes on allotment land for tribal water quality standards, it is possible that the state could be approved for jurisdiction if it requested, pursuant to the rider, the re-

lated tribal programs. The other topic is related to the federal government's trust responsibility. Mr. Martella stated that because of the trust relationship, EPA would interpret any ambiguity in the rider language to the tribe's benefit and in accord with EPA's Indian policy.

If you have questions or comments about the meeting, please forward them to me at hook.jonathan@epa.gov or to Ben Harrison at harrison.ben@epa.gov.

On a completely different note, I recently had the privilege of participating in the inaugural ceremonies of Dr. Linda Sue Warner as the new president of Haskell



**Dr. Jonathan Hook and
Dr. Linda Sue Warner**

Indian Nations University. We are currently working with Haskell on several initiatives and look forward to her leadership in their environmental studies program.

Region 6 Works Toward Cumulative Risk Assessment

EPA is exploring new approaches for evaluating the overall risk of multiple stressors on communities. The combined effects of multiple stressors on vulnerable groups over time may be greater than a single effect. It is likely that combinations of multiple environmental or health stressors can potentially have a significant impact on a community's traditional

lifeways or culture.

The Office of Environmental Justice and Tribal Affairs (OEJTA) created a task force to conduct a Cumulative Risk Assessment Pilot Project with the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma. This unique assessment will include considerations for traditional lifeways and culture. (cont'd on page 3)



Abandoned cars line the riverbank of a tribal community.

Tribal Team Update

Randy Gee, Associate Director



**Randy Gee,
Associate Director
for Tribal Affairs**

September 17 marked an important day as I started an Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignment as the new Associate Director for Tribal Affairs at the EPA Region 6 Office of Environmental Justice and Tribal Affairs.

I have been with the Cherokee Nation Environmental Programs and the Inter-Tribal Environmental Council (ITEC) for over nine years and have been involved with the Regional

Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) and served as the Tribal Representative on the Exchange Network Partnership and Resource Group. I am Dine (Navajo) and Muscogee (Creek).

At ITEC and with the RTOC, I worked with very talented tribal environmental professionals and scientists. I also witnessed the progress of tribal environmental departments developing capacity in water and air

quality monitoring, using Global Positioning Systems and Geographic Information Systems in addressing environmental concerns, and developing environmental outreach programs to teach both young and old the importance of protecting our environment.

The R6 Tribal Team is here to assist you. Feel free to contact your individual project officer or contact me at (214) 665-8355 or at gee.randy@epa.gov.

Environmental Justice Team Update

Shirley Augurson, Associate Director

The Environmental Justice team attended the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) Public Meeting in September. The meeting covered two major topics: addressing the disproportionate burden placed on communities by air pollution from the movement of freight and key issues related to integration of environmental justice in EPA's programs, policies, and activities.

Environmental pollution from the movement of freight, also known as the "goods movement," is becoming a major public health concern. The "goods movement" involves diesel-powered vehicles and equipment, resulting in significant emissions of air toxics. EPA requested that the NEJAC provide recommendations on how to most effectively address this issue.

EPA discussed the EJ Strategic Enforcement Assessment Tool and EJ Program Reviews, two key initiatives being undertaken to further our efforts toward environmental justice integration.

For additional information related to the NEJAC, please contact me at (214) 665-7401 or at augurson.shirley@epa.gov.

Addressing Tribal Solid Waste

Solid Waste Program Update



**An open dump on
tribal land**

The EPA Region 6 Tribal Solid Waste Program recently coordinated with the Inter-Tribal Environmental Council and the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, as well as the states of Oklahoma and New Mexico, on several tribal solid waste events.

An enforcement workshop was developed for

dealing with illegal dumping on pueblo and tribal lands in New Mexico. EPA explained our tribal solid waste program and federal partnerships to help tribes develop sustainable programs. The workshop addressed jurisdiction issues, prosecution of non-tribal members, and responsibility for open dump clean-ups.

At a workshop in Oklahoma, multiple regulating agencies provided information on available resources. EPA and Oklahoma continue their discussions on the state's initiative to work closer with tribes to help with their solid waste programs and unique issues facing tribes in Oklahoma.

Water Quality Training Offered to Tribes

Water Program Update

The Osage Nation collaborated with the R6 Water Quality Protection Division and the United States Geological Survey during the past year to provide three workshops "Introduction to Field Water Quality Methods for the Tribes of the US Environmental Protection Agency Region 6."

The workshops, held in Oklahoma and New Mexico, emphasized clean sampling protocols for metals collection and analysis in surface water. They also included field prepa-

ration, water monitoring, integrated-flow techniques, and discharge and field measurements.

Attendees spent one day in class learning about the field methods used in the USGS-Water Resources Discipline and the complexity of collecting defensible water quality data and quality assurance data. The other two days of the workshops were held at a stream site giving the class participants the opportunity to perform the sampling protocols

themselves and to use their own field equipment.

The practical knowledge and hands-on experience of the workshops helped participants improve their sampling techniques, increasing data quality. For additional information, please contact George Craft at (214) 554-6684 or at craft.george@epa.gov.



Class participants engage in hands-on activities with their USGS instructor.

EPA & Tribe Partner in Joint Inspection

Compliance Assurance and Enforcement Program Update

The Compliance Assurance and Enforcement Division's mission is to promote compliance with federal environmental regulations in partnership with our States and Tribes.

In September 2007, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Compliance Evaluation Inspection (CEI) was per-

formed at the Town of Berna-lillo Waste Water Treatment Plant. The plant discharges treated effluent into the Rio Grande.

Since the outfall is located on tribal lands, the tribal environmental inspector was invited to accompany EPA on the inspection. The Tribe is also in the process of obtaining federal credentials to be

able to perform environmental inspections on tribal land.

During this joint inspection, the Tribe cross-trained with EPA and got to watch how EPA conducts CEIs within the NPDES program. For more information, please contact Juan Ibarra at (214) 665-8493 or at ibarra.juan@epa.gov.

Cumulative Risk Assessment

(Continued from Page 1)

OEJTA will work in collaboration with other government agencies, universities, and community members to develop a method that more effectively assess the effects of a combination of multiple stressors.

One goal of this effort is to develop a process for cumulative risk assessment that can be replicated in other communities. The diversity of

our task force should ensure broad distribution of the findings and conclusions. We believe this study will lay the groundwork for innovative approaches to better address environmental concerns of people nationwide.

For more information on cumulative risk assessments, contact Todd Spinks at (214) 665-6569 or at spinks.brandon@epa.gov.



A smokestack towers over the Ponca community.

**Cumulative
Risk
Assessments
examine the
effects of
multiple
stressors on
communities.**

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
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Office of Environmental Justice and Tribal Affairs**

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**SAVE THE DATE!
for
THE STATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
IN AMERICA**

**March 26-29th
Washington, DC**

Please send requests for additional information to:
ejinamerica2008@yahoo.com

**Coming soon . . .
FY09 GAP GRANTS**

Stay tuned to our Tribal Team
Web page for information.

www.epa.gov/region6/6dra/oejta/tribalaffairs